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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
TUESDAY, JANUARY 18, 2005

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE
THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL
US infiltrates Iran - Sabah
Secret US operations inside Iran - Hurriyet

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US targets 40 Iranian nuclear facilities - Milliyet
Bush aims to topple the mullahs in Iran - Milliyet
Archbishop Casemoussa abducted in Mosul - Hurriyet
Saddam denies responsibility in Halabja killings - Sabah
Israeli military opposes Gaza withdrawal plan - Aksam

OPINION MAKERS

US special teams in Iraq - Yeni Safak
Saddam loyalists plan attacks against Iraqi ballot boxes -
Cumhuriyet
Ankara warns UN, Iraq on Kirkuk vote - Cumhuriyet
Shiites want democracy for Iraq, not theocracy - Zaman
Robert Fisk: Western journalists report from Baghdad hotel
rooms - Yeni Safak
Erdogan to lobby for Cyprus at Davos meetings - Cumhuriyet
Abbas wants to block attacks against Israel - Zaman

BRIEFING

US operatives gather intelligence on Iranian nuclear sites:
All Turkish papers cite a "New Yorker" magazine report by
Seymour Hersh claiming that US special forces commandos have
been operating inside Iran since mid-2004 to identify
nuclear weapons sites for possible air strikes. The
Pentagon and White House have strongly denied the
allegations.

Ankara warns Iraq over Kirkuk vote: Osman Koruturk,
Turkey's special Iraq representative, cautioned Iraqi
electoral authorities to reject the registration of Kurdish
voters in Kirkuk who are not legally entitled to vote,
"Sabah" reported on Sunday. The Kurds reportedly reached
agreement with the Iraqi government Friday that cleared the
way for an estimated 100,000 Kurds expelled from Kirkuk
under Saddam Hussein's Arabization policy to vote in the
January 30 elections. The deal disrupted the region's
balance of power in favor of the Kurds, at the risk of
enflaming tensions in the ethnically volatile city.
Koruturk, the top Turkish diplomat on Iraq, said Ankara was
not opposed to the return of displaced Kurds to Kirkuk, but
warned that the Kurds who have recently returned to Kirkuk
are not those who were expelled under Saddam. The Iraqi
Turkmen Front (ITF) threatened last week to boycott the
elections unless the Kurds put an end to 'tricks' aimed at
influencing the outcome of the vote in Kirkuk. "Cumhuriyet"
quotes an unidentified MFA official as saying it is the duty
of the Turkish Government to warn the UN, Iraqi officials,
and the international community against efforts to create
tension in Kirkuk 'at such a sensitive time.'

Erdogan sends peace message to Abbas: Turkey's Minister of
Transport, Binali Yildirim, conveyed a 'peace message' from
PM Erdogan to new Palestinian leader Mahmud Abbas and
Israeli Communications Minister Dalia Itzik, "Yeni Safak"
reports. In his message, Erdogan said Turkey is ready to
contribute to the Middle East peace process. The
establishment of a Palestinian state will be made a reality
through diplomacy rather than fighting, Erdogan stressed.
He also urged Abbas to prevent violence by making some
radical Palestinian organizations part of the political
system.

Azerbaijan, Armenia to discuss nagorno-Karabakh:

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and his Armenian counterpart, Robert Kocharyan, will reportedly meet this summer to negotiate the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, "Zaman" reports on Monday. According to the Azeri APA news agency, Russia has promised to help the OSCE Minsk Group in its mediation efforts.

PM Erdogan to visit tsunami-stricken regions: PM Erdogan is to visit South Asian countries affected by the December 26 tsunami beginning February 3, Monday papers report. Erdogan

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will take aid donated by Turkish government foundations and NGOs to Indonesia, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia on his four-day visit.

30,000 terror victims demand compensation: "Sabah" reports 30,000 victims of terrorism around Turkey have applied to the government for compensation for damages suffered during clashes with separatist terrorists. Turkey's mainly Kurdish Diyarbakir province tops the list with 10,000 applications for compensation. The Turkish parliament approved a law in July 2004 that provides for compensation to be paid to victims of terror.

EDITORIAL OPINION:

? Iran
? Cyprus

"Iranian Crisis At the Door"

Erdal Safak commented in the mass appeal "Sabah" (1/18): "Ever since the Reagan administration, US administrations have looked for ways to exact revenge on Iran for the embarrassing 444-day hostage crisis in Tehran. In November 1979, Abbas Abdi led a group of Iranian youth who attacked the US Embassy in Tehran, took 52 Embassy officials hostage, and continued their action for 444 days. The Americans were released right after Reagan's inauguration ceremony in January 1981. Surprisingly, while President Bush prepares for his second term in the White House, information about a possible operation against Iran has started to leak into the US media. Allegedly, US special forces entered Iran through Pakistan six months ago in order to locate and identify Iranian nuclear facilities. Even though the White House has denied the allegations, we have three good reasons to believe that they are true: 1. The Bush Administration will never admit that preparations for such an operation are underway. 2. The source for this news, reporter Seymour Hersh, is a very credible journalist who uncovered the Abu-Ghraib scandal. 3. The US has repeatedly said it will not tolerate Iran's becoming a nuclear power. After two years of pressure from the US, Iran says it has every right to continue its uranium enrichment program, and points out that international inspectors have confirmed that Iran's is not a military program. According to the experts, it is very easy to produce nuclear weapons from enriched uranium. Unless there is a regime change in Iran, this decision leaves the US with two choices -- either accept Iran as a nuclear power, or carry out a military strike. If the US accepts the continuation of this program, the Middle East will turn into a nuclear storage facility. Plans for the second alternative - not only by the US, but by Israel as well - have been underway for a long time. But there is one very serious problem: Iran has dispersed its nuclear facilities (in all, 36 of them) all around the country, including in underground facilities. The US special forces have been trying to find these facilities for the past six months. I think Bush's foreign policy menu in the new term will include Iran. That means we can expect new earthquakes in our region."

"No Meeting with Annan in Davos, No Cyprus Plan in the Near Future"

Murat Yetkin opined in the liberal-intellectual "Radikal" (1/18): "I had been wondering about the credibility of recent reports claiming that a new Cyprus plan will be discussed by PM Erdogan and Kofi Annan in Davos during the World Economic Summit. If we look at the facts, it becomes obvious that such plans will not be realized. First of all, PM Erdogan will be in Davos in January 27-28. Annan will be in Poland on Jan.27 to participate in ceremonies marking the 60th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp. From Poland, Annan will travel to south Asian countries to meet with tsunami victims. In Davos, Erdogan has already scheduled a meeting with British Prime Minister Tony Blair to discuss the Cyprus issue. That meeting is expected to focus on the customs union between Turkey and the EU, extension of Turkey's EU accession protocol to the union's 10 new members, and ending the economic isolation of the 'TRNC.' Erdogan and Blair are not likely to discuss a new plan to resolve the Cyprus issue, because no such plan has yet been prepared. There are a few ideas being tossed around on this issue, but even a draft for a plan does not exist. The efforts for a settlement in

Cyprus are being handled separately from Turkey's EU entry process, and are being viewed as a long-term initiative. There are many obstacles to a settlement in the short term, especially the election timetable that will make it politically difficult to move such a plan forward. Annan believes that a new Cyprus plan needs the support of Greek Cypriot leader Papadopoulos. His cooperation is a must in preparing a new plan. Therefore, Turkey's priority now should be to force Papadopoulos to undertake steps for a settlement."

EDELMAN